



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR THOMAS DENENBERG

When Electra Havemeyer Webb founded Shelburne Museum 75 years ago, she imagined a place that was approachable, accessible, and committed to history, art, and learning.

No project was too complicated when it came to realizing her vision. What started as one original building (what is now Variety Unit) grew to 39. From Dorset House to the Lighthouse to Stagecoach Inn to the Covered Bridge—25 buildings appeared on flatbeds, in pieces to be reassembled, or in the case of the steamboat *Ticonderoga* on railroad tracks laid for the purpose of moving the boat two miles over land from Lake Champlain. One can imagine it was an exciting time.

In the 1980s that intrepid spirit was in full effect, witness the silo for Round Barn arriving by helicopter. In 2013, the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, inaugurated year-round operation and, by adding new state-of-the-art galleries and classroom space, opened up the institution to new audiences.

As we reach the three-quarters-of-a-century milestone, there is no doubt that Mrs. Webb's spirit of innovation and improvement still imbues the Museum. I see this at every turn, from our stewardship of the landscape and historic structures that make up the campus to the cutting-edge exhibitions we present—projects that tackle the salient issues of our day such as social justice and climate change with humility and creative spirit.

(cover) Roger Conant, *Laying Tracks to move the Ticonderoga from Shelburne Bay to the Museum grounds, 1955.* PS4.20.6-50.

(right) Unidentified photographer, *Electra Havemeyer Webb with Construction Crew of Stagecoach Inn, 1949.* PS3.3-42.

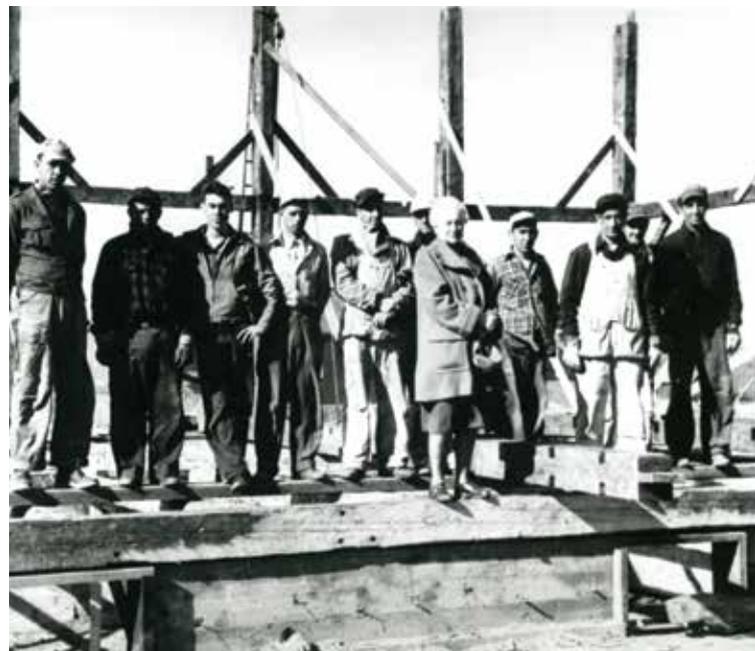
The renewal of two buildings original to the early campus, Stagecoach Inn and The Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries at Hat and Fragrance, where two of the Museum's most important collections reside—American Folk Art and quilts—is a perfect metaphor for today's Shelburne Museum. Not only have we updated the mechanical systems in these buildings and painted the galleries afresh, we have dedicated the last two years to re-evaluating the stories we tell with these objects, once again placing the collections in new contexts to ensure relevance in the 21st century.

Shelburne Museum is a magical place for any number of reasons, but above all, it is relevant.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom". The signature is stylized and appears to be written on a white background.

Thomas Denenberg, PhD
John Wilmerding Director



A Unique Vision

Shelburne Museum's founder created "an educational project" driven by passion and innovation

Shelburne Museum is the remarkable result of one trailblazing person's lifelong passion and profound commitment to a unique vision. Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888–1960) was a woman of unparalleled fortitude and taste who stood out as one of the few woman collectors in her time as well as one of the earliest collectors of what we now know as American folk art. Seventy-five years after she founded Shelburne Museum, Mrs. Webb's "educational project, varied and alive" stands as a testament to its founder's innovation in both the art and museum fields.

Vivacious and determined, Electra Havemeyer was born in 1888 to European and Asian art collectors H.O. and Louisine Havemeyer whose wealth was derived from the sugar industry. She lived a life of privilege in New York City and traveled often, including trips to Paris to spend time with family friend and art advisor the Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt. When Mrs. Webb began collecting art at age 19, she diverged from her parents' interests by acquiring a piece of American folk art, a tobaccoist figure. She collected art that was created not by formally schooled European artists but ordinary craftsmen and artisans in the United States. Few other collectors saw value in "the beauty of everyday things" as Mrs. Webb did. In focusing her collection on folk art, Mrs. Webb preserved pieces of American life and created a uniquely American aesthetic that challenged the preference for European styles at the time.

In 1910, she married James Watson Webb, whose wealth came from the railroad industry and whose father founded Shelburne Farms. This brought Mrs. Webb to Vermont. Here she built a museum to share her collections with others and promote art and history education based on the principle that art not only could be created by anyone but also should be available to all. Her belief in broadening access to enthralling and experiential learning remains a core component of the Museum's mission to this day.

From her first folk art purchase to one of her final acquisitions, Andrew Wyeth's *Soaring*, the unexpected defined Mrs. Webb's collecting. Throughout her life, she pursued objects that affected her aesthetically and emotionally, whether a coverlet, a house, or a turn-of-the-century carousel. Given Mrs. Webb's capricious taste, it is not surprising that Shelburne Museum is equally whimsical and that to visit the campus is to enter a dreamlike landscape of historical buildings, gardens, and other surprises. Where else, after all, can we find a steamship docked in a grassy landscape, a horseshoe-shaped barn filled with 19th-century carriages, or a hunting lodge replete with taxidermied animals, all within the same museum campus?

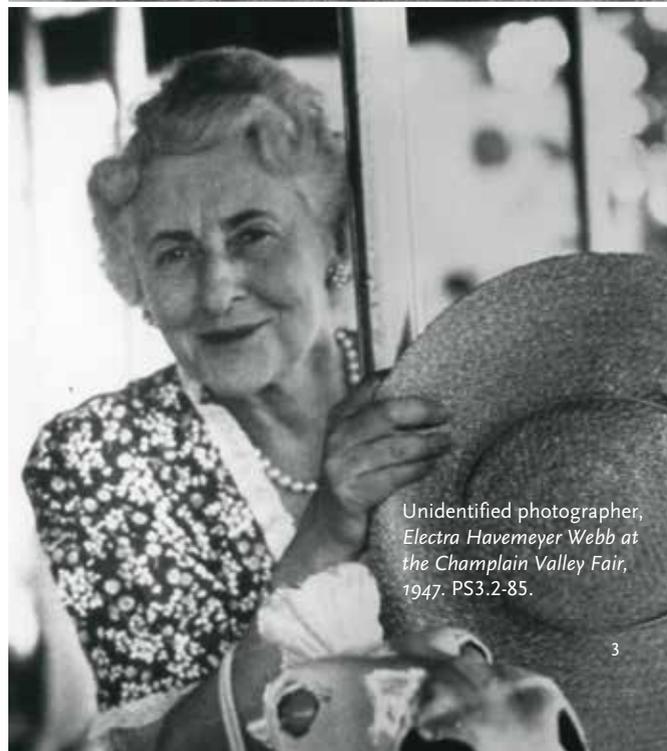
Ahead of her time, as one of the nation's first female museum founders, Mrs. Webb assembled something unique: incredible collections in a village-like setting of historic New England buildings and landscapes, and a welcoming and informal place for visitors to experience the sheer pleasure of looking and learning. At the heart of all of Shelburne Museum's offerings are the endlessly compelling and encyclopedic collections initiated by Mrs. Webb that continue to grow, thanks to today's generation of curators, donors, artists, and craftspeople. Engaged with the past, connected to the present, and intrigued by the future, Shelburne is and has always been a museum unlike any other.



Unidentified photographer, *Studio Portrait of H.O. & Louisine Havemeyer with their children, Horace, Electra & Adaline*, ca. 1889. PS3.1-28.



Einars J. Mengis, *Electra Havemeyer Webb with quilt display in Dana-Spencer Textile Gallery at Hat and Fragrance*, 1957. PS1.10-Webb, E.3.



Unidentified photographer, *Electra Havemeyer Webb at the Champlain Valley Fair*, 1947. PS3.2-85.

Leaving a Lasting Impression

Shelburne Museum's Impressionist paintings reflect a family passion for collecting

The story of Shelburne Museum's Impressionist paintings collection is a generational one that ties the Museum's past to its present.

Surrounded by exquisite artworks from an early age, Shelburne Museum Founder Electra Havemeyer Webb honed her aesthetic sense and cultivated her passion for collecting in a family that valued and promoted Impressionist art. Her parents, Louisine and H.O. Havemeyer, were important collectors of European and Asian art; her mother is responsible for bringing the first Impressionist painting—Claude Monet's *Le pont, Amsterdam* (1870–71)—across the Atlantic for an American collection. At the time, the Havemeyers' taste was avant-garde, as the Impressionist style was not as popular or well-respected as it is today. Ultimately, the Havemeyers acquired more than 500 works, many on the advice and guidance of Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt.

The couple's collecting ethos reflected H.O. Havemeyer's belief that a collector must be bold and follow their instincts no matter what others might say. He advised his youngest daughter Electra, "It takes nerve as well as taste to be a collector." Electra Havemeyer followed this creed throughout her life and inherited her parents' sharp instinct for collecting.

In 1929, Mrs. Webb inherited many of her parents' Impressionist paintings, including works by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Édouard Manet, including *The Grand Canal, Venice* (1875), which Louisine Havemeyer had affectionately renamed "Blue Venice." Years later, Mrs. Webb was determined to bring her parents' Impressionist collection to Shelburne Museum and planned to construct a new building to house the paintings and share them with others. One of her sons, James Watson Webb Jr., fulfilled his mother's wish in a way that linked three generations of his family to their shared heritage of collecting and recognized its significance to the Museum's story. Following Mrs. Webb's death in 1960, James Watson Webb Jr. became the Museum's president and oversaw construction of the new Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial Building to display the Impressionist paintings. Watson recommended modeling the building's interior after the rooms in his childhood home in New York City, where he and his four siblings—like their mother before them—had grown up surrounded by art.



Today, the Museum's Impressionist collection symbolizes an impressive shared connection within one family and the influences that led to the creation of Shelburne Museum. The Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial Building is the only place in Vermont where visitors can find world-class Impressionist art on public display. Seeing people from all walks of life engage with artworks that had once been inaccessible to the public underscores the trailblazing nature of Mrs. Webb's decision to convert her family's personal passion for collecting into an educational experience for all.

(left) Mary Cassatt, *Louisine Havemeyer and Her Daughter Electra* (detail), 1895. Pastel on wove paper, 24 x 30 1/2 in. Museum purchase. 1996-46. Photography by Bruce Schwarz.

(top) Claude Monet, *Le pont, Amsterdam (The Drawbridge, Amsterdam)*, 1870–71. Oil on canvas, 21 x 25 in. Gift of the Electra Havemeyer Webb Fund, Inc., 1972-69.5.

(above) Édouard Manet, *The Grand Canal, Venice*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 23 1/8 x 28 1/8 in. Gift of the Electra Havemeyer Webb Fund, Inc. 1972-69.15.



(top and background) Charles Louis Heyde, *Mount Mansfield, Vermont*, 1852–92. Oil on canvas, 20 x 34 in. Museum purchase, acquired from Richard Gipson. 1959-273.1. Photography by Andy Duback.

(below) Edward Lamson Henry, *Old Clock on the Stairs*, 1868. Oil on canvas, 20 7/8 x 16 1/2 in. Museum purchase, acquired from Maxim Karolik. 1957-690.41. Photography by Andy Duback

(bottom) John Frederick Peto, *Ordinary Objects in the Artist's Creative Mind*, 1887. Oil on canvas, 56 3/8 x 33 1/4 in. Museum purchase, acquired from Maxim Karolik. 1959-265.33. Photography by Bruce Schwarz.



Collecting with Purpose

Shelburne Museum's American paintings collection shows its founder's purposeful collecting strategy

Just as Electra Havemeyer Webb's parents collected French Impressionist paintings at a time when the works were not highly sought after on this side of the Atlantic, Mrs. Webb turned her attention to collecting 19th-century American paintings late in life at a time when few others were. In the late 1950s, most collectors were investing in European modernism or abstract paintings. Works of art that might have been celebrated and pursued 50, 75, or 100 years earlier—such as genre scenes by Edward Lamson Henry—were distinctly out of fashion.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Webb followed her father's example and continued to collect items that appealed to her regardless of popular opinion. Driven by the visual appeal as much as the history and value of potential acquisitions, she joked about not being able to hold back when it came to acquiring new things. But in fact, Mrs. Webb collected quite strategically and with great foresight, and she assembled her American paintings collection with the intention of juxtaposing well-known American artists with lesser-known painters. Her relationships with art dealers like Edith Halpert, who displayed both folk art and American modernist works at her Downtown Gallery in New York City, greatly influenced Mrs. Webb's collecting. Ultimately, Mrs. Webb built an impressive and thoughtfully curated American paintings collection that tells an abundance of stories about American life and culture.

Today, the Museum carries on Mrs. Webb's commitment to collecting works of American art that capture the ideas and aesthetics of their moment in a visually striking way. Visitors can view many of Mrs. Webb's acquisitions in *Painting a Nation: American Art at Shelburne Museum*, an ongoing exhibition in Webb Gallery. Built in 1958, the building is a short walk from the Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial Building, which houses the Impressionist paintings that Mrs. Webb inherited from her parents in 1929. From the Memorial Building to Webb Gallery, Shelburne's fine art collection establishes a crucial link between the past and the present; between generations of artists and also generations of people who have loved and lived with the art they made. As it grows and evolves, it does so always with the idea of strengthening that link and extending it to include future generations of creators and museumgoers.

Art of the People

Shelburne Museum's founder established a trailblazing folk art collection

Electra Havemeyer Webb was one of the earliest collectors of American folk art, or art crafted by ordinary people who used and lived with the objects they made. She bought her first folk art sculpture—a cigar-store figure from Stamford, Connecticut—in 1907, when she was only 19 years old. Later, she remembered that she “wanted to collect something that nobody else was collecting. . . . At that time, nobody wanted Americana, so I started buying and I've never stopped.” Mrs. Webb traveled throughout New England in search of folk art, and by the 1940s she was buying from such prominent dealers as Edith Halpert at the Downtown Gallery in New York City. Halpert's gallery and ultimately Mrs. Webb's collections helped to make important connections between American folk art and American modernism, an artistic and cultural movement that recognized the effects of America's rapid industrialization on both individuals and society.

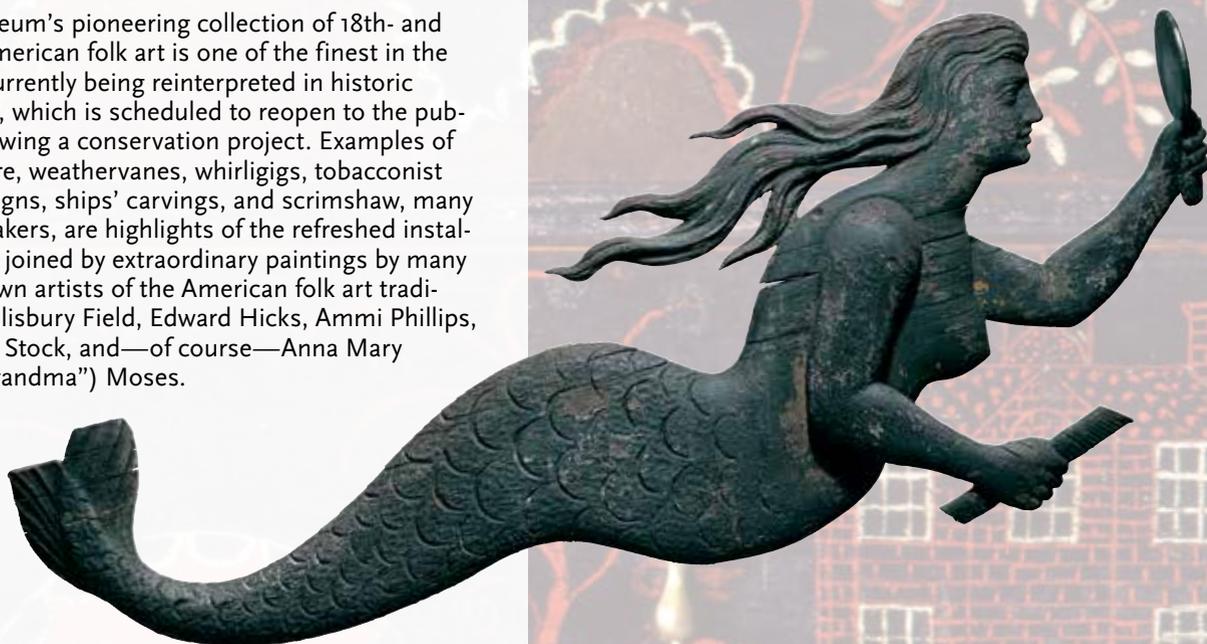
Shelburne Museum's pioneering collection of 18th- and 19th-century American folk art is one of the finest in the nation and is currently being reinterpreted in historic Stagecoach Inn, which is scheduled to reopen to the public in 2022 following a conservation project. Examples of painted furniture, weathervanes, whirligigs, tobacconist figures, trade signs, ships' carvings, and scrimshaw, many by unknown makers, are highlights of the refreshed installation. They are joined by extraordinary paintings by many of the best-known artists of the American folk art tradition: Erastus Salisbury Field, Edward Hicks, Ammi Phillips, Joseph Whiting Stock, and—of course—Anna Mary Robertson (“Grandma”) Moses.

“My interpretation [of folk art] is a simple one,” wrote Mrs. Webb in 1955. “Since the word ‘folk’ in America means all of us, folk art is that self-expression which has welled up from the hearts and hands of the people.” That combination of heart and hand is the defining character of Shelburne Museum's collection of American folk art.

(top) Unidentified maker, *Jack Tar - Ship Chandler's Trade Sign*, ca. 1860–70. Carved and painted wood, 61 x 27 x 24 in. Gift of Dr. L. J. Wainer. 1962-24.

(above right) Attributed to Warren Gould Roby, *Mermaid Weathervane*, 1850–75. Pine, paint, brass, iron, and metal, 25 x 53 x 5 in. Museum purchase, 1952. 1961-1.23. Photography by Andy Duback.

(right and background) Unidentified maker, *Harvard Chest*, 1700–25. Painted pine and brass, 44 x 38 1/2 x 21 in. Gift of Katharine Prentis Murphy and Edmund Astley Prentis. 1956-694.8. Photograph by J. David Bohl.





Art with a Function

Shelburne Museum's standout collection of decoys numbers more than 1,200



Like many objects that we now think of as folk art, hunting decoys were created not just to be looked at but to be used in a very specific way. Even today, hunters use wild-fowl decoys to create the illusion of a safe place for ducks and geese to congregate, thereby setting a trap that makes the birds easy targets for a nearby shotgun.

Before the age of mass production, decoys were carefully handcrafted; carved from wood and then strategically painted to look like their real-life counterparts. Sculptors' creations represented the diversity of avian life in North America and often imitated land-and-water dwellers such as ducks, geese, swans, and shorebirds. As mass-market versions and alternative hunting techniques took over in the 20th century, the old-style decoys became highly collectible.

Joel Barber, a New York City architect, artist, and carver, was among the first to promote decoys as a uniquely American art form with his 1934 book, *Wild Fowl Decoys*. The 1952 acquisition from Barber of more than 400 outstanding decoys established Shelburne Museum's decoy collection. Today, the collection numbers more than 1,200 pieces and includes many standout works, including ones by Anthony Elmer Crowell, one of the most revered American decoy makers. His *Black Duck Preening* is a naturalistic work that captures the unguarded motion of a bird cleaning its feathers.

(top) Captain Charles Christopher Osgood, *Osgood Canada Goose Decoys*, ca. 1849. Wood, paint, metal, and leather. Gift of Mrs. P.H.B. Frelinghuysen. 1953-301.5, 4 & 3. Photography by RLPhoto.

(above) A. Elmer Crowell, *Black Duck Preening Decoy*, 1920. Wood, paint and glass, 7 5/8 x 6 1/2 x 15 3/8 in. 2015-0.3. Photography by RLPhoto.

Rediscovering Charles Sumner Bunn's Decoys

For nearly a century, confusion and controversy surrounded the identity of the maker of five shorebird decoys in Shelburne Museum's collection. This group of rare and beautifully crafted shorebirds had been attributed and reattributed to the hands of multiple craftsmen. Last year, after thoroughly reviewing in-depth research on the subject and weighing the existing facts, Shelburne Museum reattributed the shorebirds in its collection to Native American carver and artist Charles Sumner Bunn (1865–1952).

Bunn, a member of the Shinnecock-Montauk Tribes, earned his living as a hunting guide with a reputation for carving realistic decoys. Bunn produced a wide variety of waterfowl decoys, including many species of ducks as well as geese and brant. His shorebird decoys have garnered attention from both collectors and historians who prize them for their realistic anatomical carving and delicate impressionistic plumage.

To learn more about Bunn and the case for the Museum's reattribution, visit the digital exhibition *In Plain Sight: Rediscovering Charles Sumner Bunn's Decoys*, on the Museum's website: <https://shelburnemuseum.org/online-exhibitions>.



Charles Sumner Bunn (1865–1952), *Dowitcher Shorebird Stick-up Decoy*, ca. 1900. Wood, paint and metal, 9 1/2 x 4 x 10 in. Gift of J. Watson, Jr., Harry H., and Samuel B. Webb. 1952-192.227. Photography by Andy Duback.

Shelburne Museum Buildings Timeline



Unidentified photographer, *Aerial View of the Museum*, 1954. PS4.1-507.

Dates signify when buildings were moved to the Museum grounds or when construction began for structures built on-site.

1946



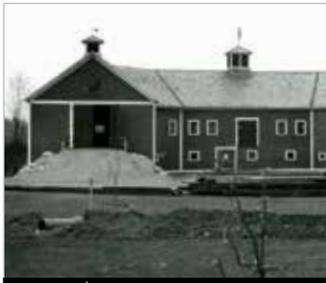
Variety Unit



Schoolhouse

From the countryside throughout New England and New York, Mrs. Webb found historic buildings that would provide appropriate settings for her collections, and she relocated them to the Museum grounds: houses, barns, a meeting house, a one-room schoolhouse, a lighthouse, a carousel, a jail, a general store, a covered bridge, and the 220-foot steamboat *Ticonderoga*. She worked with a landscape design team to situate them within a welcoming environment that today includes lush gardens and enticing views. This timeline illustrates the chronological development of Shelburne Museum's campus over the course of its seventy-five-year history.

1947



Horseshoe Barn

Mrs. Webb was inspired to construct Horseshoe Barn to house and display the carriage collection of her father-in-law, William Seward Webb, which he gave to her in the 1940s.

1948



Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries



Vermont House

While Mrs. Webb acquired the Stagecoach Inn with the intention of using it as a gallery for her American folk art collection, recent archival research has uncovered evidence that she briefly considered turning the ground floor of the inn into a functioning tavern, where visitors could dine on historically appropriate meals.

1949



Café (Tuckaway Barn)



Stagecoach Inn



Stone Cottage



Toy Shop

1950



Covered Bridge



Dutton House

In 1949, as the State of Vermont prepared to replace a bridge over Vermont's Lamoille River in Cambridge, Vermont. Mrs. Webb was offered the bridge. It was dismantled in 1950, moved, and opened as the entrance to the Museum in March 1951.

1952



General Store



Meeting House



Lighthouse



Shaker Shed

1953



Stencil House



Dorset House



Castleton Slate Jail

1954



Diamond Barn



Prentis House

The masonry and floorboards of the first-floor rooms in Prentis House, combined with the well-preserved quality of the building's materials overall, led to the Museum's decision to purchase the structure, from Hadley, Massachusetts, in its entirety. Museum staff moved the house in 1954 and re-erected it on the Museum grounds in 1955.

1955



Horseshoe Barn Annex



Owl Cottage



Print Shop



Settler's House



Ticonderoga



Weaving Shop

Purchasing the *Ticonderoga* was only the beginning. Getting the boat from Lake Champlain, across farmland and railroad crossings, to its new home required amazing ingenuity and grit. It took 62 days to move the boat to the Museum grounds.

1956



Locomotive 220



Smokehouse



Blacksmith Shop

1957



Beach Lodge

Begun in 1957, Beach Lodge was one of the final construction projects completed before Electra Webb's death in 1960.



Einars J. Mengis, *Electra Havemeyer Webb Welcoming Locomotive 220 to Shelburne Museum, 1956. PS4.26e14.*

1958



Sawmill



Webb Gallery

1959



Apothecary



Railroad Station

The Railroad Station was constructed in 1890 from a design by Robert Henderson Robertson, a New York architect who also designed Shelburne Farms, the Lake Champlain estate of Mrs. Webb's in-laws. When the railroad discontinued passenger service in 1953, the station was dismantled and moved to the Museum grounds in 1959.

1960



Circus Parade Building



Beach Gallery



Unidentified photographer, *Electra Havemeyer Webb and Group Looking at the Circus Building Model, 1955. Gelatin silver Print, 3 x 5 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum Archives. PS4.32-10.*

1962

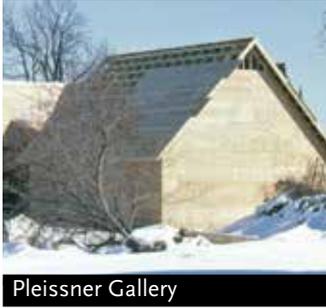


Electra Havemeyer Webb Memorial Building



Grand Isle

1984



Pleissner Gallery

1985



Round Barn

1988



McClure Visitor's Center/
Store

2000



Collections Management
Building



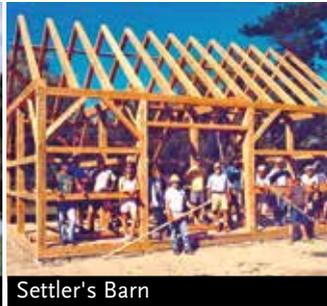
1950's House

The 1950s house opened in 2000 as a temporary exhibition to explore family life and the growing consumer culture in post-WWII Vermont. In response to visitor interest, the Fifties House remained on exhibition until 2011. The House was taken down as part of the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education Project in 2012.

2001



Kalkin House



Settler's Barn

Kalkin House (originally Collector's House) was designed by Adam Kalkin and constructed on the Museum grounds in 2001. The structure was built entirely of prefabricated and recycled materials. Between 2005–2010 the building featured exhibitions of modern art and design.

2013



Pizzagalli Center for Art and
Education

The Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education is the Museum's newest structure. Architectural elements highlight locally sourced stone, slate and wood, and the building utilizes highly efficient lighting, heating, ventilation, and climate control systems. The Pizzagalli Center houses two 2,500 square foot galleries, a 32-seat classroom, and an auditorium with seating for 135. The Museum has presented numerous special exhibitions and public programs in the space since the Center's opening in 2013.



Shelburne Museum Diorama created in the 1950s. Photography by Andy Duback.

Setting a Pattern

Shelburne Museum's textile collection presents a tapestry of historic and contemporary artworks

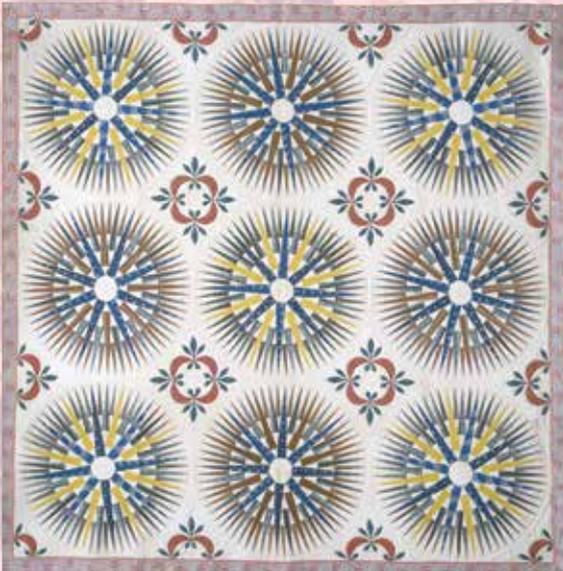
Shelburne Museum's extraordinary textile collection interweaves intricately stitched pieces from across states and centuries.

Shelburne Museum Founder Electra Havemeyer Webb helped pioneer the study of American textiles and was among the very first to exhibit them as works of art. She was attracted to their bold, graphic patterns, intense colors, and imaginative combinations of design elements, often whimsical and out of scale. The still-growing collection she began at Shelburne is remarkable in its size and quality and includes quilts, woven coverlets, needlework, hooked rugs, and printed fabrics from the 18th century to the present.

The fact that a woman championed the cause of textiles as an art form was very apropos, considering that women handcrafted many of the historic and contemporary items in the Museum's textile collection. In the 18th and 19th centuries, most women were expected to craft the bedclothes, draperies, and apparel their homes and families required. The quilts and other bedcoverings that women created were a critical necessity in poorly heated early American homes. Many of these functional pieces are part of the Museum's collection of more than 600 American-made quilts today.

The Museum's quilts are world renowned for their exceptional variety and high quality. The collection focuses on New England and Northern states, but it also includes other distinctive examples, including quilts from the South and Midwest as well as the Amish and Mennonite communities of Pennsylvania and Ohio. Featured techniques in the collection include album, appliqué, chintz, crazy, pieces, whitework, and whole-cloth. The diversity of methods and materials demonstrates not only the richness and variety of quilting traditions across time but also the creative possibilities of building and expanding upon them.

Museum visitors can enjoy rotating exhibitions of the quilts, in addition to hooked rugs, woven coverlets, and samplers, in the Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries. Most of the pieces in these collections were produced in 19th-century New England. Notable 20th-century examples include a remarkable group of 50 statehood rugs by Molly Nye Tobey (1893–1984) and a collection of contemporary hooked rugs by Patty Yoder (1943–2005).



(top) Attributed to Emeline Barker, *Applique and Pieced Mariner's Compass and Hickory Leaf Quilt*, ca. 1860. Cotton, 100 x 96 in. Museum purchase, acquired from Florence Peto. 1952-545.

(middle) Judy B. Dales, *Dancing on the Dark Side of the Moon*, 1997. Cotton, nylon, silk, poly-cotton and rayon, 57 x 42 in. Donation by the artist, Judy B. Dales. 2021-1. Photography by Andy Duback.

(left and background) Patty Yoder, *J is for Joseph, Who is a Coat of Many Colors*, 1995. Wool and linen, 30 x 33 in. Gift of the Yoder Family. 2010-98.13. Photography by Andy Duback.



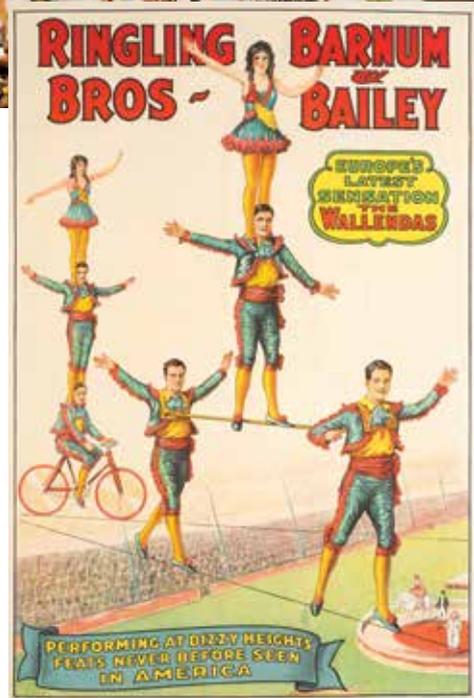
A Whimsical Experience

Circus collection provides an overview of circus, childhood material culture

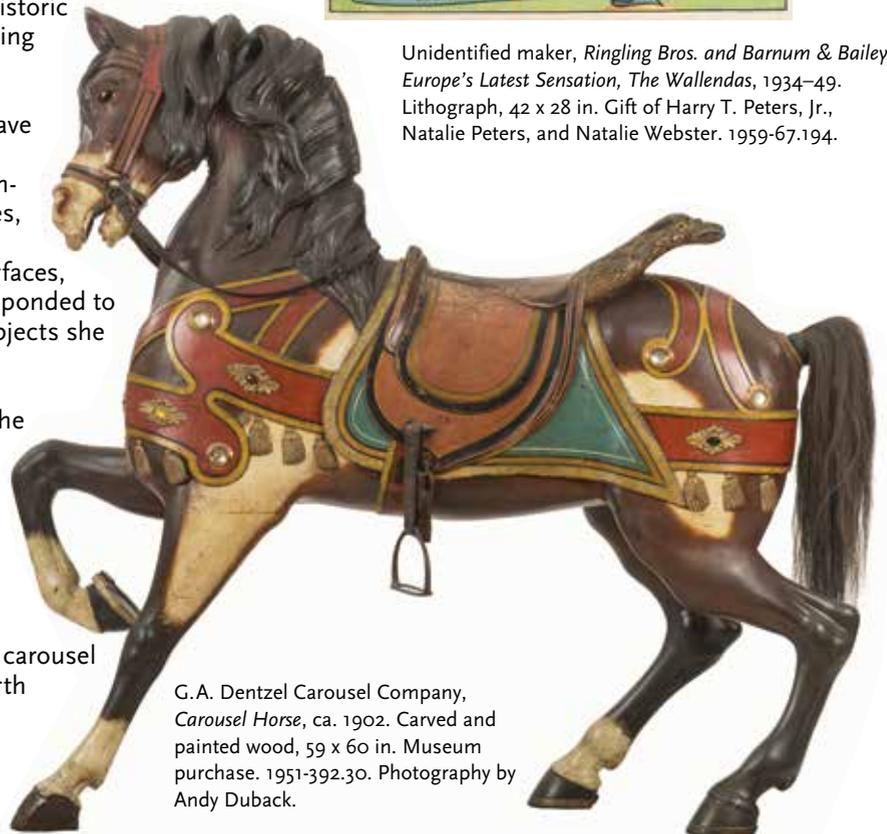
Mrs. Webb was so delighted with her acquisition of the miniature Arnold Circus Parade in 1959 that she had an utterly unique, horseshoe-shaped building designed to display it. The parade extends nearly the entire 518-foot length of the Circus Building. In time, that same building has come to house many additional circus acquisitions as well, including the Kirk Bros. Circus, a 3,500-piece carved miniature three-ring circus with an audience. The collections also include more than 500 historic circus posters from Barnum and Bailey, Ringling Brothers, and other major shows.

Historically, circuses and carousels did not have much to do with one another. However, both carousels and circuses were popular entertainments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and both were highly sensory experiences—a whirl of color, movement, and glittering surfaces, accompanied by music. Mrs. Webb surely responded to these visual qualities in the circus-themed objects she acquired for her museum.

In that sense, it seems perfectly logical that the Circus Building today also contains approximately 40 different turn-of-the-century carousel figures made by the Gustav Dentzel Carousel Company of Philadelphia: lions, tigers, deer, and ponies that are the near life-size counterparts to the miniatures in the Arnold parade and the Kirk circus. Outside, visitors can climb aboard an operating 1920s carousel made by the Allan Herschell Company of North Tonawanda, New York, and be a part of the historic fun.



Unidentified maker, *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Europe's Latest Sensation, The Wallendas*, 1934–49. Lithograph, 42 x 28 in. Gift of Harry T. Peters, Jr., Natalie Peters, and Natalie Webster. 1959-67.194.



G.A. Dentzel Carousel Company, *Carousel Horse*, ca. 1902. Carved and painted wood, 59 x 60 in. Museum purchase. 1951-392.30. Photography by Andy Duback.

A Moving Collection

Transportation collection lies at the heart of Shelburne Museum's origin

Among Shelburne Museum's many beautiful and unique collections, one in particular is notable for driving Mrs. Webb's vision for the Museum from dream to reality.

It was in Vermont, early in her marriage, that Electra Havemeyer Webb first had ideas about building a museum, although her collection of Americana was not yet extensive. The opportunity to realize her dream came in the form of a 1946 gift from the estate of her in-laws, Dr. William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb. In a 1958 account, Mrs. Webb said that after the doctor and his wife died, the Webb children had to decide what to do with the family's collection of horse-drawn vehicles.

"I couldn't bear to have these carriages go, so I said, 'Would you consider giving them to me, if I had a little piece of property and kept them in Shelburne where they could be seen by others and not go away from Shelburne?' And they were all delighted," Mrs. Webb recalled in 1958. "Now that was the spark that lit the fire. I had my opening and that was the start of Shelburne Museum."

The gift of 28 horse-drawn vehicles—including elegant carriages and sleighs—formed the foundation of Shelburne Museum's vast collections. Historic modes of transportation of all kinds remained a priority for Mrs. Webb as she continued to build her museum. One of her greatest triumphs was the acquisition of the 1906 steamboat *Ticonderoga*, which she had moved two miles overland from Lake Champlain to the heart of Shelburne Museum's campus. The transportation of the 220-foot side-wheel passenger steamer stands as one of the great feats of maritime preservation.



Not long after the Museum moved the "Ti" to its final docking place, the Museum expanded its transportation collection with Locomotive 220 and other railroad-themed holdings. The 220 is known as the "locomotive of the Presidents" because it pulled special trains that carried Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Museum's private rail car, *Grand Isle*, was built in the 1890s to convey the governor of Vermont.

The last item in the Museum's railroad complex is the original Town of Shelburne railroad station, complete with a stationmaster's office, telegraphy systems, and other historic railroad memorabilia. Mrs. Webb and her family members used the station on their many trips to and from New York City. Today, the station represents the importance of transportation in American life and in Mrs. Webb's personal and professional journey from collector to museum founder.



(left) Locomotive 220 and the Railroad complex at Shelburne Museum.

(left below) Unidentified maker, Cutter, 1840. Wood and metal, 41 1/2 x 41 x 72 1/2 in. Gift of John Kenneth Byard, 1953. 40-S-25. Photography by Andy Duback.

(top) Million & Guiet, Berlin, ca. 1890. Polychrome wood, iron, leather, silk, and taffeta, 87 x 76 x 126 in. Gift of the Webb Family in memory of Dr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb. 1947-18.14. Photography by Andy Duback.

(above) Steamship *Ticonderoga* in Autumn. Photography by Andy Duback.



75th Anniversary Events

- February 9** *Our Collection: Electra Havemeyer Webb, Edith Halpert, and Folk Art* online exhibition opening; webinar with Museum Associate Curator Carolyn Bauer and guest Rebecca Shaykin
- February 23** Conservation Month program with Museum Objects Conservator Nancie Ravenel
- March 9** *Museum in Miniature* webinar with Francie and John Downing Senior Curator of American Art Kory Rogers
- March 30** *Luigi Lucioni: Modern Light* online exhibition opening
- April 13** *Maria Shell: Off the Grid*: online exhibition opening and webinar with Curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff
- May 15** *Eyesight & Insight: Lens on American Art* gallery exhibition opens. Talk by John Wilmerding Director Tom Denenberg, Curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff, and Associate Curator Carolyn Bauer
- June 25** *Luigi Lucioni: Modern Light* gallery exhibition opens
- Summer 2022** Reopening of Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries and Stagecoach Inn



A Gift for Generations to Come

Kitty Coppock has been coming to and supporting Shelburne Museum for over three decades. Her experiences and memories of the Museum are as varied as the collection itself. From falling in love with the Brick House at first sight to finding fossils imprinted on the steps of Beach Lodge to discovering something new with every visit to Variety Unit, she has always found Shelburne Museum to be a source of joy.

In her own words, Kitty describes what she loves about the Museum and why she chose to make a planned gift: “What is happening at Shelburne Museum is remarkable. We are losing so much of our past so quickly now. It’s wonderful to have something that both documents and celebrates the past and examines the world through a contemporary lens, with exhibitions featuring living artists.” In this way, Shelburne Museum sustains the vision of its founder, Electra Havemeyer Webb, to be “an educational project, varied and alive.”

Kitty’s planned gift is a vote of confidence and investment in the Museum’s future. “You never know what you’ll find at Shelburne Museum—it’s full of surprises,” she says. By making this commitment to the Museum, Kitty hopes to share the wonder of a visit to Shelburne Museum for generations to come.



SHELBURNE MUSEUM
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For 75 years, Shelburne Museum Members have shared a passion for art, material culture, and everything that makes Shelburne a museum experience like no other—from enriching exhibitions to educational and fun programs to spectacular grounds and gardens.

Experience unlimited access, invitations to special events, and unique opportunities. Benefits include:

- Free admission to the Museum
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- Discounts to ticketed public programs
- Discounts at the Museum Store and Weathervane Café

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Visit shelburnemuseum.org/member for more information regarding membership levels and benefits.

Photography by Lee Krohn.